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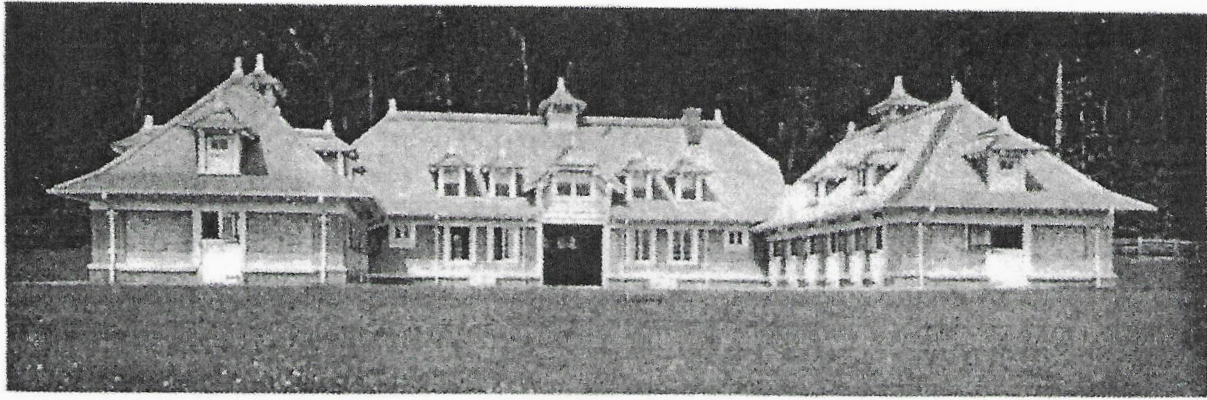
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POLO PONY STABLE.

"Harbor Hill," the Estate of Mr. Clarence Mackay, Roslyn, L. I.

Photo by Thomas E. Marr.

Warren & Wetmore, Architects.

Guy Lowell, Landscape Architect.

## THE LAY-OUT OF A LARGE ESTATE.

"Harbor Hill," the Country-Seat of Mr. Clarence Mackay,  
at Roslyn, L. I.



THE increasing tendency on the part of Americans to live more in the country, and to take more interest in their country places is having an important effect upon American architectural practice. Landscape architecture is becoming a well-recognized department of architectural design—recognized, that is, not merely by the profession, but by the clients of the profession. Time was when the good American, even if he admitted the assistance of a trained designer in working out the plans of his house, never doubted his own ability to select its location together with that of the outlying buildings, and to plan the approach and the other lines of communication. As to the arrangement of the flower beds that was a business, for which the only necessary qualification was the wearing of a petticoat. A good deal of this general disposition still remains. The ordinary American when he is building himself a country place, is much more likely to defer to expert counsel in the design for his house than he is in the lay-out of his grounds; and this is true in spite of the fact that the problem presented by the lay-out of an estate of as much as a few acres is frequently as difficult and as technical as the problem offered by the design of the house.

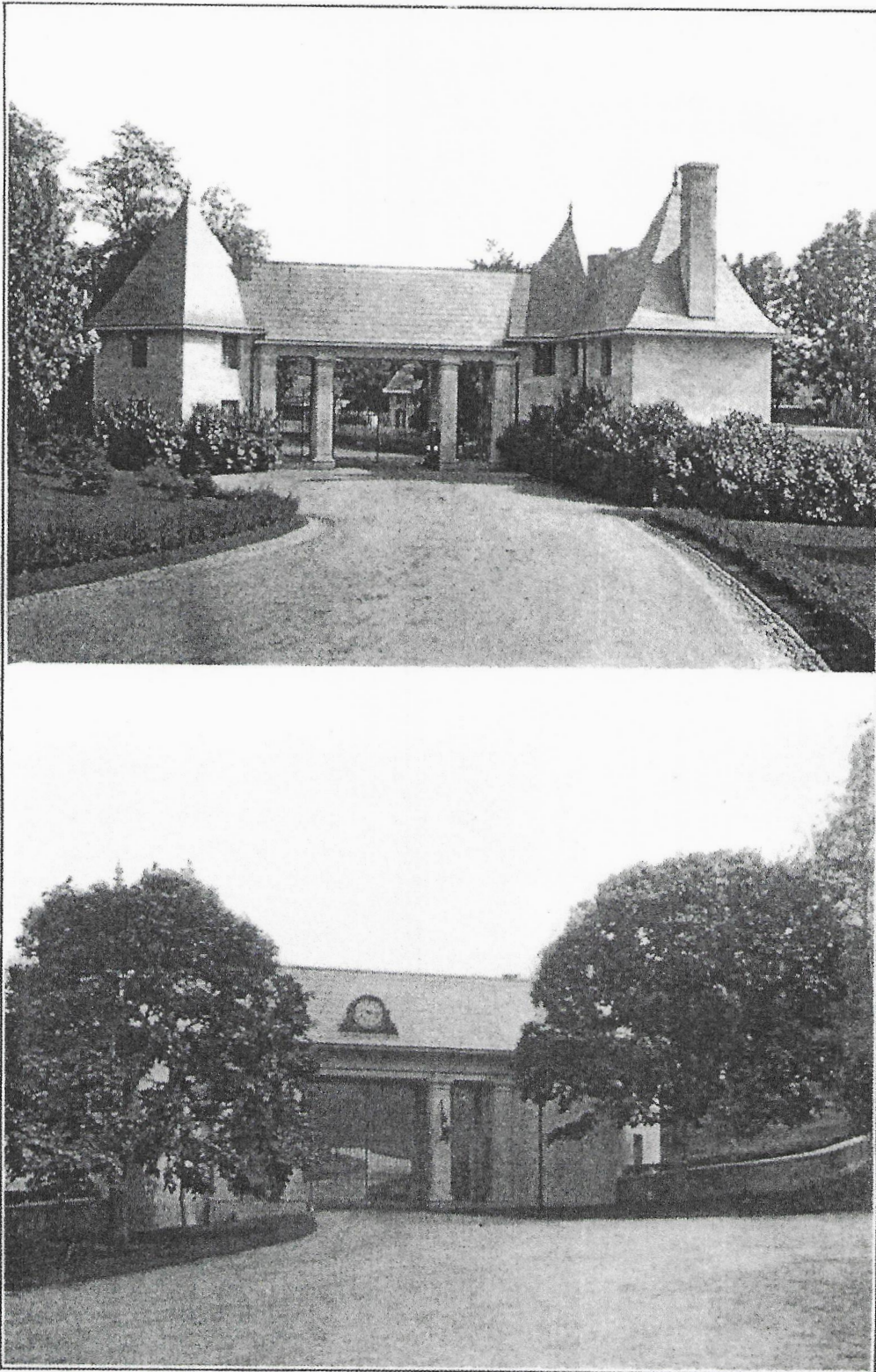
In fact, one might go further and declare that the average man of intelligence is much more likely to understand the means, whereby a successful architectural result is obtained than he is to understand



the means, whereby a successful result is obtained in landscape architecture. Well-designed buildings are more familiar to him than well-designed estates, and he generally fails utterly to appreciate that the values to be sought in deciding on the situation of a house, a flower-garden, and the convenient accessories of a country place are as abstract as the strictly architectural values and perhaps even more recondite. The situation of the house in relation to the view, the exposure, the prevailing winds, the surrounding foliage, and the other buildings; the situation of the garden in relation to the house, the exposure, the view and the trees; the scale and dimensions of the house in relation to the large planting; the extent to which the straight lines of an enclosure or of some subordinate architectural feature are desirable either to define the view, or partially to shut it out; the careful distribution of open and planted spaces in the immediate vicinity of the house; the use of proper planting, sometimes to soften the architecture, sometimes to complete and enhance certain native landscape effects, or sometimes to add a spectacular and dramatic quality to certain particular points of view; the lay-out of the approaches for the purposes both of convenient access and of the best effect; and the running of the roads in relation to the grades of the land and the making of entertaining vistas—the complete satisfaction of all these requirements or of half of them, is not a business which an amateur, even in a petticoat, is qualified to supply; and requirements of this kind, although less complicated and numerous, exist in the cases of comparatively small estates as well as in those of larger size.

The problems of landscape design are, in truth, so special that some landscape architects claim for it a wholly special province. The claim is that the landscape architect should be carefully distinguished from the house architect, and that, when it comes to designing a large estate, the two kinds of architect should in some way work together. Whether in such instances of coöperation the landscape architect should commission the house architect, just as the latter might commission an engineer to design a heating plant, or whether the house architect should commission the landscape architect, or whether both should be independently commissioned by the owner of the estate—these several alternatives, which might cause some difficulty in practice, have been left open both by people who make this claim and the owners who have sought to make the claim good. As a matter of fact all three methods have been used, and doubtless will continue to be used; but I do not believe that the landscape architects will become a branch of the profession rigidly distinguished from house architects. At the present time many excellent architects are undoubtedly ill-qualified to lay out an elab-





THE LODGE AND GATE AT "HARBOR HILL."  
The Estate of Mr. Clarence Mackay, at Roslyn, L. I.  
Photos by Thomas E. Marr.

McKim, Mead & White, Architects.

Guy Lowell, Landscape Architect.



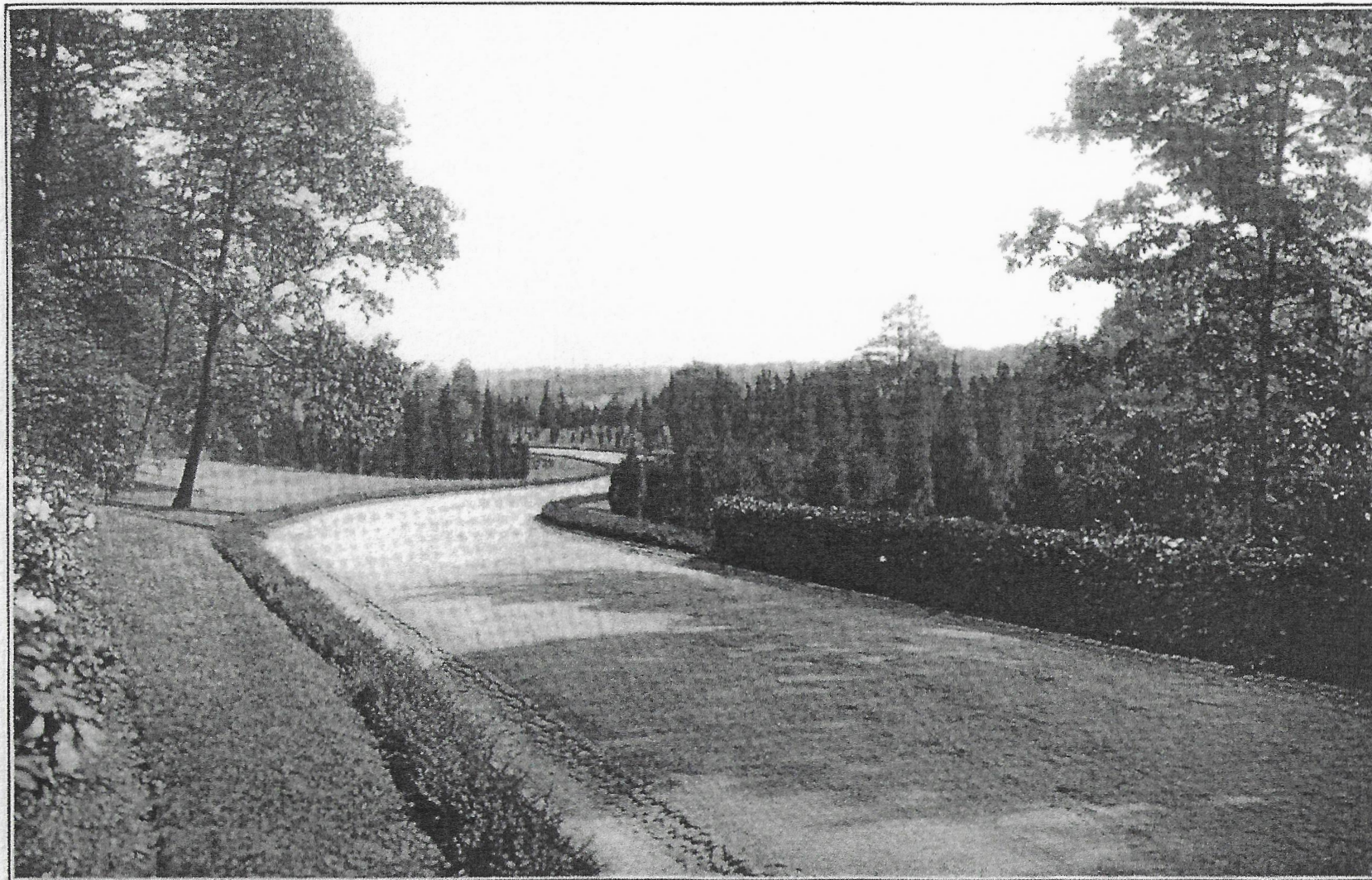


Photo by Thomas E. Marr.

THE MAIN AVENUE OF "HARBOR HILL."  
The Estate of Mr. Clarence Mackay, at Roslyn, L. I.

Guy Lowell, Landscape Architect.

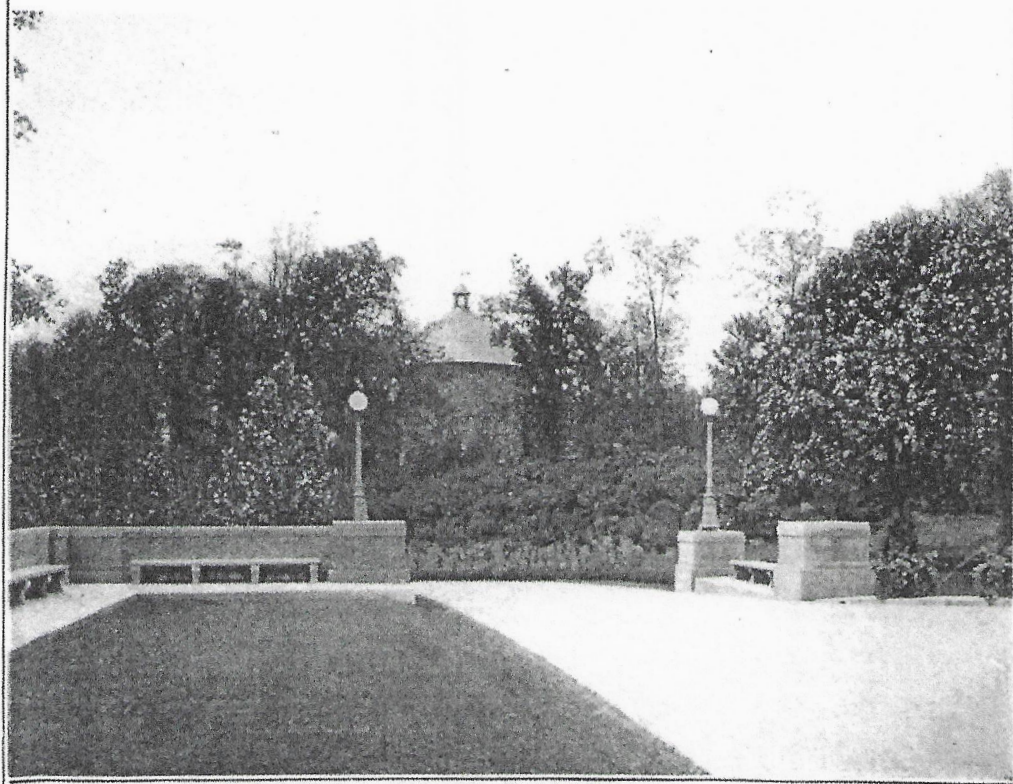
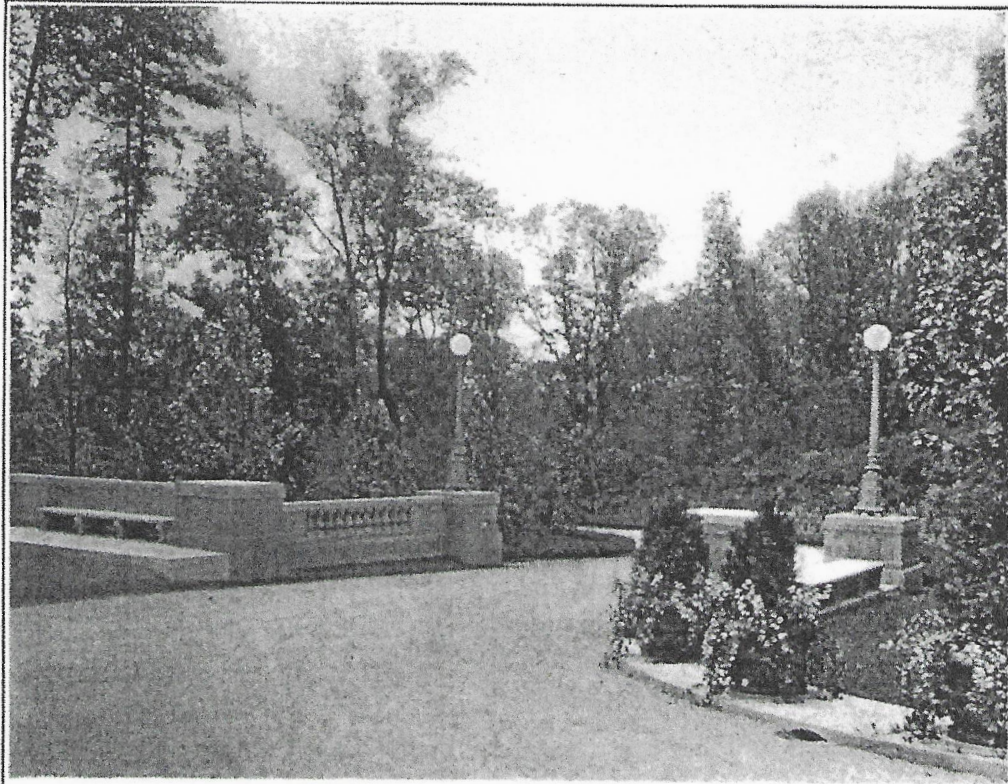


orate or even a small country estate. They know little about landscape in relation to architectural values; and in journeying through suburban regions inhabited by well-to-do people, one frequently sees the design of a tolerable house defeated by a wholly intolerable surrounding of landscape architecture. There is probably no form, for example, which American architects have borrowed from Europe, which has been more frightfully misused than the pergola. For this reason it would be well for candid architects, who distrust their training, gifts or experience as landscape designers, to call to their aid men, specially qualified to do this kind of work. But it is improbable that the two branches of the profession will be rigidly divided. Certain architects will be celebrated particularly for their work in landscape architecture; but the landscape architect will, whenever he gets a chance, design the buildings as well as the lay-out, while the house architect will consider himself, and I hope will be, as fully competent to lay out an estate as he is to decorate a handsome room.

The number of large country estates, in which a serious attempt has been made to obtain a complete architectural and landscape design is comparatively small. The American farmer, whether he churned a few hundred acres on a New England hillside or a few thousand acres of western prairie, has rarely had the money, the taste or the leisure to do anything with his land but work it. On the other hand, rich men of business, in buying a country place, have until recent years been generally satisfied with a palace on a lot. Even when they owned comparatively large estates they had little impulse really to develop them; and this was only natural, because there is little use in spending lavishly for the purpose of making a country estate handsome, unless its owner has the patience to wait for results, and the leisure to enjoy them. Well! the owners of such estates take more leisure now than they once did. They spend more time in the country and more money upon it. They are becoming, if you please, country gentlemen, though in a different sense from an English country gentleman. They do not derive their substance from the soil, and their estates are laid out solely for their own pleasure. The farm is accessory to the house. The estate has no function, except the important one from a certain point of view, of contributing to the pleasure of the owner.

When country places assume the character indicated above, it is in some respects a limitation and in others an advantage. There can be no doubt that the peculiar charm of the English country-houses has issued from the permanent and substantial ties which have connected their owners with the soil. These gentlemen lived not only in the country, but on it. For generations they





THE BELL-MOUTH AT "HARBOR HILL."

The Estate of Mr. Clarence Mackay, at Roslyn, L. I.

Photos by Thomas E. Marr.

Guy Lowell, Landscape Architect.

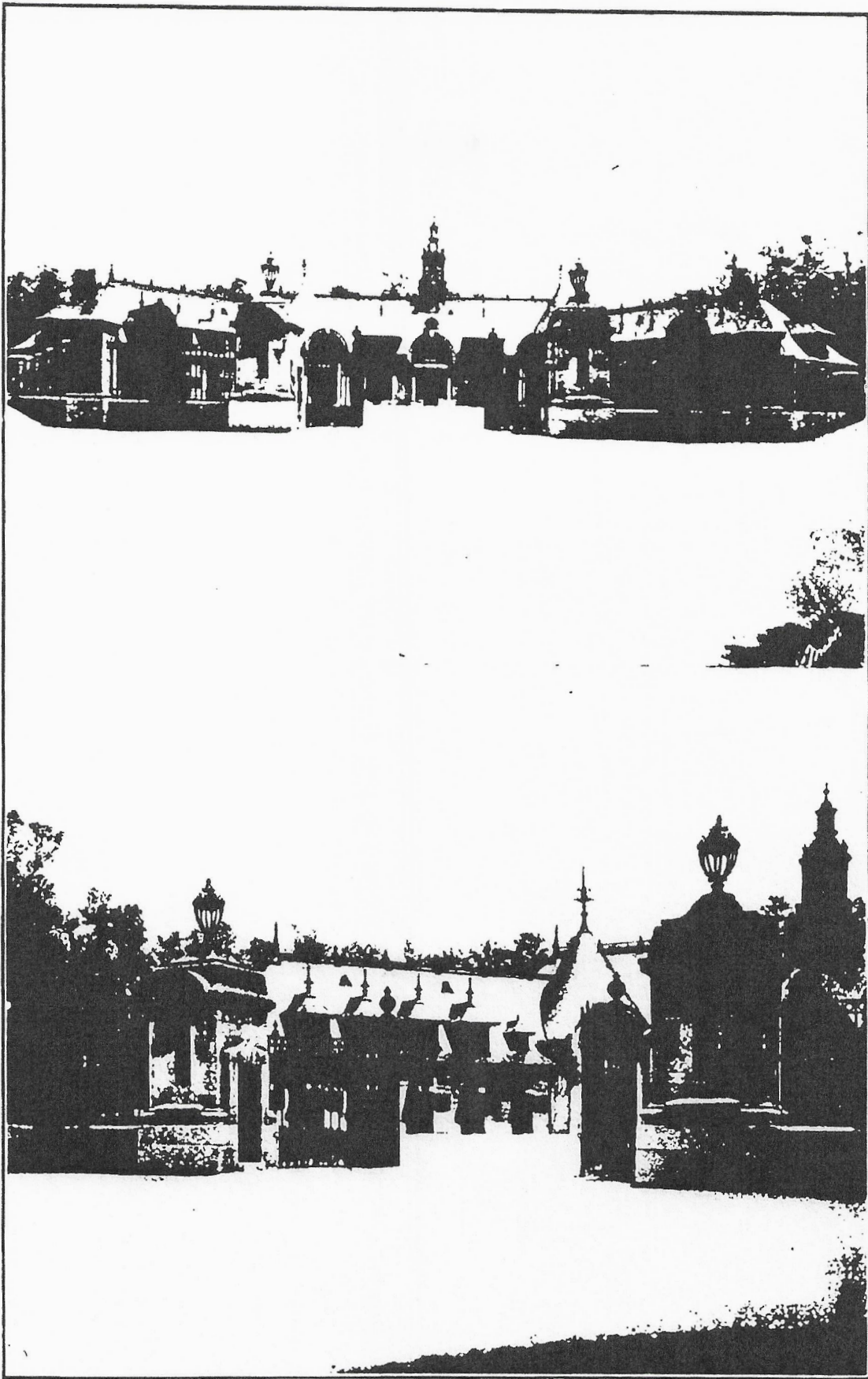


have given lavishly of their time and money, so that their houses and the surroundings might look or serve its purpose better; and this prolonged and devoted attention to the good of their estates has redeemed many initial architectural mistakes, and has absolutely confirmed the value of many happy architectural ideas. But the English country places are unique in the continuity of the social and economic conditions out of which they were born. In the other countries of Europe forms of landscape architecture have been wrought, which in the essentials of appropriate design are superior to the English country places; and they have been wrought under economic conditions analogous to those which now prevail in this country. The Italian villas and gardens and the later French chateaux were erected for gentlemen who were merely sojourners on the soil; they were designed together with their surroundings for the purpose in one way or another of amusing owners, who derived large incomes generally from official employment; and these large incomes enabled their possessor to have their estates laid out in the light of a consistent and comprehensive architectural idea. In our own country the owners of very large estates are similarly free to conduct their operations in a generous way. By the lavish expenditure of money in energetically realizing a comprehensive plan, the architect can keep his client interested by means of quick and spectacular results.

The majority of the very large American country estates are situated in the vicinity of New York. Their owners are for the most part tied to the vicinity of Wall and Broad Streets by golden strings. They want the quiet of spacious country estate, and rapid transit to New York. Some of the estates are situated along the Hudson and some in New Jersey; but on Long Island more than anywhere else; and among the Long Island estates, one of the most interesting is "Harbor Hill," the estate of Mr. Clarence Mackay, at Roslyn. It is one of the most interesting because of its size, the opportunities which it offered, and the extent to which these opportunities have been used. The estate is by way of being completely developed to serve its purpose as a gentleman's residence; and it is extraordinary how much has been accomplished in a few years to touch up the landscape and soften the architecture with supplementary planting. The effect will, of course, be still greater after this planting obtains a good growth, and after certain additional improvements have been made; but the illustrations which accompany this text are as interesting for what they show as for what they promise.

In the case of "Harbor Hill" several different architects have coöperated to carry out the complete design. The house and the lodge are the work of Messrs. McKim, Mead & White; the stables,



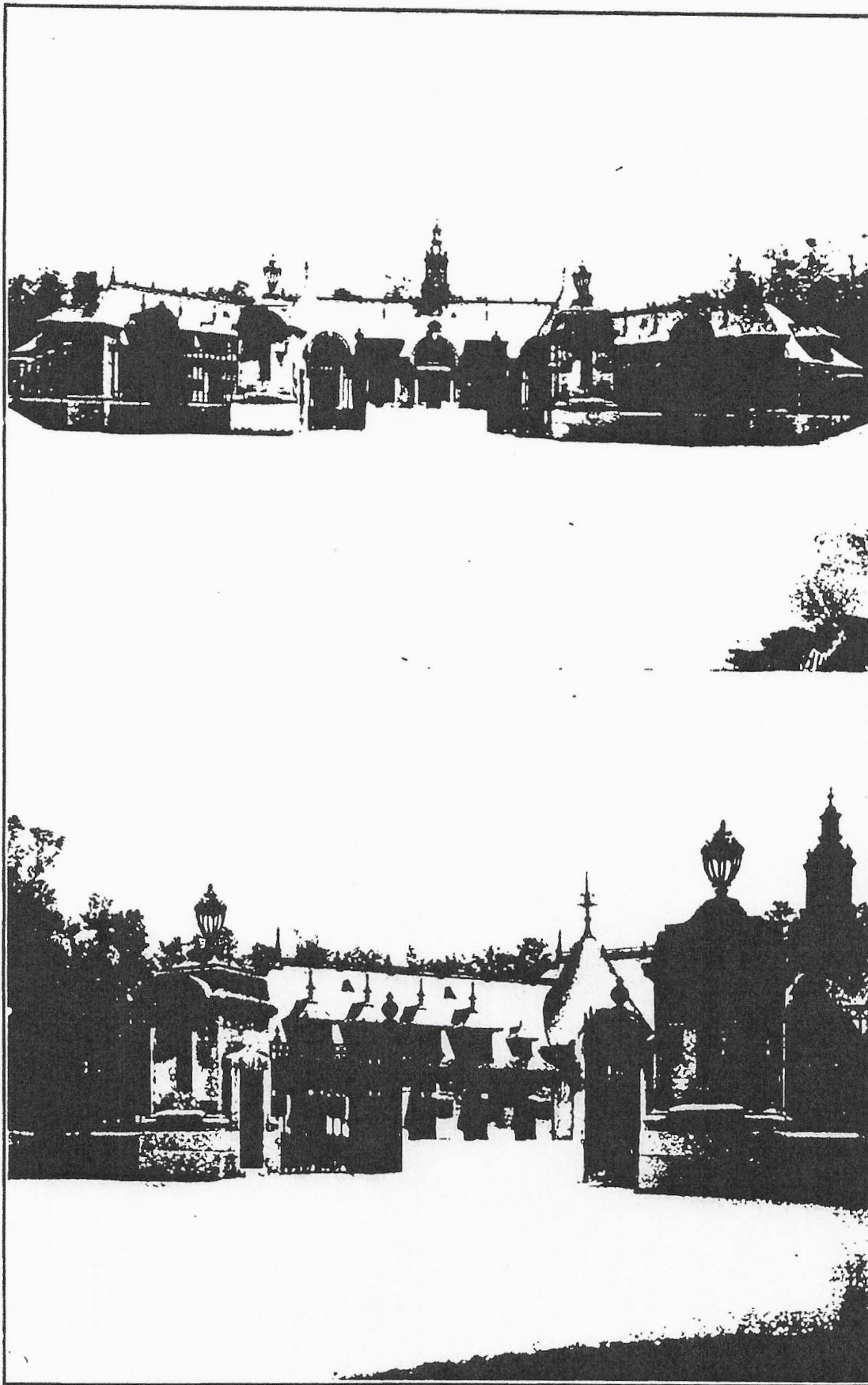


THE STABLE AT "HARBOR HILL."

Photos by Thomas E. Marr.

Warren & Wetmore, Architects.

Guy Lowell, Landscape Architect.



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the barns, the dairy and the other accessory buildings have all of them issued from the office of Warren and Wetmore. Finally the designing of the approaches, the connecting roads, the planting and the garden was placed in the hands of Mr. Guy Lowell. Just at present we are interested exclusively in the work of Mr. Lowell. When he assumed charge of his share of it, the house was already under construction, and that element of the design was a condition rather than an opportunity; but the locations of all the other buildings were selected by him subject, of course, to the wishes of his clients, and the whole estate was laid out, cleared and planted under his supervision. While not responsible, consequently for the design of any of the buildings, or for the line of the road from the station to the house, he is responsible for their setting, for their approaches, for their arrangement, and for their connections.

The estate of "Harbor Hill" includes roughly about five hundred and thirty acres. It is a solid chunk of land about a mile square, bounded by the railroad, and the highway, with no public roads running through it, and with its dimensions approximately equal in every direction. Of the five hundred or more acres which it contains, only about seventy are cleared or cultivated land. The rest is timbered, and for the most part the timber is large and fine. The trees consist chiefly of hardwood, such as oak and chestnut. There are no evergreens, except a few cedars, and Mr. Lowell has cleverly used to the utmost advantage the small chance that he had to obtain winter foliage.

The name of the estate, "Harbor Hill," indicates that it does not consist, as so many estates on Long Island do, of perfectly level ground. On the contrary, it contains a large hill, which practically comprises the whole of the property. The top of the hill is pushed somewhat towards the southern line of the estate; but it is near enough the center thereof to justify the description of the property as a hill with approximately similar slopes in every direction. As a matter of fact the south slope towards the railroad station is steeper than the slopes in the other directions. On the other hand, the gentler northern slope terminates in fifty acres of comparatively flat land, a half a mile or more from the top of the hill.

In laying out such an estate as this for a gentleman's residence, certain arrangements are immediately suggested as given by the conformation of the land. The house would naturally be situated on the top of the hill, which, as it happens, affords an exceptionally good location for a handsome residence, and really magnificent outlooks both south and west. The hill is and always has been called "Harbor Hill," because it overlooks Hempstead Harbor, and because in former days its commanding position was used for a beacon to assist boats in entering the harbor. Since the whole of

the estate is tributary to the residence, the site of the residence became the central point of the lay-out, just as it was the dominating point in the conformation of the land. The roads radiate from this center, their lines being determined partly by convenience, partly by the grades of the hill, and partly by their appearance. Thus, as already mentioned, the south slope is steeper than any other. At the same time, since the railroad station is situated at the foot of the hill in that direction, the main approach to the house must climb the steeper slope. Even if it were desirable from the point of view of design to run the main road straight to the top of the hill, it would be impossible because of the heavy grade; and as a matter of fact, the drive curves gently up the hill until it reaches the top, at which point it turns into a straight approach.

If the conformation of the land established the top of the hill as the one inevitable site of the house, it is equally true that the level fields at the northern end of the property were marked as the proper place for the farm buildings and the service gardens. The only building on the top of the hill except the residence is the carriage house and stable. The other accessory buildings, the kennels and the chicken farm excepted, are scattered along the northern boundary of the property. They are not all of them grouped together, because, although such grouping is, perhaps, more convenient and economical, it results in a less interesting and varied lay-out. As it is, the superintendent's house, the farm buildings, the polo pony stables, the conservatory and gardens are most of them well separated; but they are connected with the house by a service road which takes a fairly straight course through the woods. The chicken farm is situated on the side of the hill near the eastern boundary of the property, and the kennels in the woods and closer to the house. Besides the road from the station to the farm buildings, to the chicken farm, and to the workshops, there is a handsome road to the north called the "North Drive," so as to connect the house with the water. The tradesmen are not allowed on the main approach, or upon the North Drive, and as the service road is inconvenient for them, the road to the chicken farm is partly for their benefit. In addition the estate is cut up with a number of attractive drives and bridle paths, across the woods, and running from one to another of the main roads. Indeed these woods are really laid out as a park, and, as we shall see, when we come to describe their planting, the effect of one kind of a park has been carried out in all the details of the design.

In the lay-out of a large estate it is generally the practice to keep the design of the grounds immediately around the house somewhat formal, so that a proper transition can be made between the definite lines of the architecture and the sinuous incoherence of nature;